

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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HOKKAIDO RURAL EVANGELISM - lectures, discussions and recommendations

Thirty Hokkaido ministers from several denominations met near Sapporo from May 17-20th under the sponsorship of the Department of Rural Evangelism of the N.C.C. During these three days, they heard lectures from specialists in rural life, discussed how this related to their work, and made suggestions for future study and work.

Prof. S. Sasamori of Hokkaido University lectured on the special problems of rural life in Hokkaido. Mr. K. Suzuki, a government specialist in his field, lectured on pioneer projects in frontier development by the government. Mr. M. Hiura, President of the Christian Hakuno Dairy College, lectured on one method of evangelism in Hokkaido. Rev. T. Kimata, a member of the NCC Rural Evangelism Department, brought into focus how rural evangelism in Hokkaido relates to the total rural evangelism program in Japan. Each lecture was followed by about three hours of discussion among the ministers.

As a result of the lectures and discussions, many specific needs, which can be readily met, came clearly to light. 1) There is a need for increased study of rural psychology and trends in current rural thought by those engaged in rural evangelism. 2) There is a pressing need for increased coordination of the work carried on by the several denominations working in Hokkaido to

prevent a sense of competition. This coordination, as it materializes, will be a significant contribution of the NCC Department. 3) Although the Kyodan already has a Rural Evangelism Emphasis Week and the Seikokai has designated a special day of prayer for rural evangelism, there is a need for some coordinated interdenominational period of emphasis on and education for rural evangelism, sponsored by the NCC. 4) There is a need for increased mutual aid between rural and urban churches. 5) An audio-visual evangelistic caravan could make a great contribution in Hokkaido. 6) In grateful memory of the late Rev. Alf Stone, the story of his life, work and contribution to evangelism in Japan should be written.

Because the meeting proved to be so valuable to the participants, they requested that a similar conference be held next year. Already a conference similar to this one for the central area of Japan has been planned for July 7-12 at I.C.U.

I.B.C. STUDENTS TO U.S.A. 17 sent out of 50

Out of 50 applicants recommended from all over the country, 17 have been selected to be sent to the U.S.A. for one or two years of study. The 8 pastors which were selected are now studying a special 3 month course in comprehension and speaking of English at the International Christian University, near Tokyo. They will be joined by eight teachers selected from Christian schools and one social worker for a three day special orientation course at the Christian Center early in July. These students will sail early this summer.

One of the eight ministers, Rev. B. Yamashita, had been accepted here in Japan but was dropped by the Interboard Committee in New York because of lack of funds. Then, a special scholarship was found which has enabled him to go. An earnest member of the Congregational Christian church in Greensboro, N.C. who had worked as janitress for many years and saved her money, left it all through her will to be used for scholarships for Christian students from abroad to study in the United States. Through this help, Mr. Yamashita will be enabled to study at the Hartford Theological Seminary.

TRENDS IN THE KYODAN - the new Moderator reports

Rev. Takeshi Muto, the new Moderator of the Kyodan (see JCAN 11/1/54, p3), observes that there are three trends he has seen in the annual meetings of the 14 districts of the Kyodan. 1) "Every district is growing in unity and intensity of fellowship." Practically all pre-amalgamation denominational loyalties are almost forgotten. This growing unity has taken place over the last 14 years, five of which were during the war. As an indication of the

growing loyalty to the Kyodan, he points to the high attendance at the annual meetings which has run over 90%, in spite of the heavy expenses of this participation.

2) "Younger ministers are more and more being elected to positions of leadership in the districts." These younger leaders are mostly in their forties and so have very little denominational background. Thus they were elected because of their personal ability and their record of service to the United Church.

3) "The Centenary Campaign of the Kyodan has just begun to really roll on the right track." The Centenary Movement of the NCC (see JCAN 4/1/55 p2) has its counterpart in each denomination. The aim of the Kyodan Centenary Campaign for this year is to increase the membership of the church and to revive those who are already members. In order to accomplish this general aim, the Campaign will operate on three levels:

A). THE LOCAL CHURCH Each local church is being encouraged this year to set up its local plan of evangelism for the Centenary Campaign. A key part of this plan will depend on close cooperation between the ministers and the laymen in the task of evangelism. Specific emphases should include encouraging members to attend worship and prayer meetings as well as carrying on daily personal Bible study. New fields of evangelism should grow out of neighborhood prayer meetings held in the homes of church members. The spirit of stewardship should be developed and should naturally result in strengthening the economy of the church.

B). THE DISTRICT The aim of the district should be to encourage fellowship between the churches. This should result in the strengthening of mutual aid between churches with the larger ones helping the smaller ones. The district should sponsor evangelical conferences, and seek to foster an experience of closer cooperation between the ministers and the missionaries.

C) THE KYODAN as a national organization has six specific projects to work on this year. It will: make a statistical study of churches in order to best plan the overall strategy for the future; publish evangelical literature; plan a national conference on evangelism; encourage the use of audio visual aids in evangelism; strengthen the cooperation between the districts; and try to relate the evangelistic movement in Japan to the evangelistic program of the world church.

WORLD UNIVERSITY SERVICE SEMINAR - 78 students from 23 nations

For two months this summer, seventy-eight students from twenty-three nations will participate in an international seminar under the sponsorship of World University Service. It is the first seminar of its kind to be held in Japan. The theme will be: The Responsibility of Higher Education Today.

Starting on July 5 there will be a week-long orientation course held at Koya san, a famous old Buddhist temple near Osaka. There will be lectures on all aspects of Japanese life from Politics to Religion. After this introduction to Japan through the ear, the group will divide into several smaller ones for two weeks of field trips around the country. This will be an introduction through the eye. They will re-assemble for a one-week work camp near Tokyo where they will get an introduction through getting their hands dirty in a public service project in an underprivileged area.

I.C.U. will be the location for a three week seminar starting from August 2nd. The three subjects for the three weeks will be: The Challenge to the University in Reforming the World, The University of Today, and The Responsibility of the University. Dr. Edwin O. Reischauer of Harvard has consented to be on the staff.

The Canada and the Japan Committees of World University Service are making the arrangements for the seminar and carrying most of the financial load. Although World University Service is not an exclusively Christian organization, in origin motivation and staff it is predominantly so.

The Chairman of the Board of WUS of Japan is Mr. Kensuke Horinouchi, former ambassador to Washington. The co-directors of the Seminar are Dr. Bruce Collier, former missionary to China; and Dr. Tomoo Odaka, Vice Pres. of the Japan Science Council and former dean of the Tokyo University School of Law. The co-administrators are Rev. Howard Norman, missionary to Japan from the United Church of Canada; and Mr. Makoto Fujita of the WUS of Japan and the National YMCA.

DR. MULIA OF INDONESIA - a lay evangelist witnesses

While Dr. Mulia of the Indonesian N.C.C. was attending the recent International Chamber of Commerce meeting in Tokyo, he was welcomed to Japan at a reception given by the Japan NCC. Dr. Mulia was educated in Law in the Netherlands, has been the Minister of Education of Indonesia, is now the President of The Christian College of Indonesia, and is also Chairman of the N.C.C.

At the reception with fifty of the leaders of the church in Japan, Dr. Mulia said that although the predominant religion in Indonesia is the aggressively active Islam, still, three percent of the Indonesians are Christians. He felt that there are two reasons for this strength: The first and main one is that the laymen are actually more active in evangelism than the pastors! Thus, a church of a hundred members has a hundred evangelists. The other reason is, that basic to the church has been the three "self" principles from the very first; self government, self support, and self propagation. The NCC which was organized in 1950 must give its permission before any missionary can enter the country for evangelistic work.

